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March 12, 2020

Nuclear Medicine Program Directors

Dear Director:

The ABNM recognizes that the current ABNM policy on leave may not allow sufficient time for unplanned leave due to COVID-19, which may include 14 days of home quarantine. Trainees may be reluctant to make the right choice to be quarantined if they are concerned about extending training time or being ineligible for certification.


The ABNM leave policy states: "Leave for any reason, such as vacation, illness, or family leave, may be taken as permitted by the local institution's graduate medical education office or equivalent, and/or applicable rules of the ACGME. In the absence of such rules, up to 6 weeks (30 working days) of leave is permitted per academic year. When Nuclear Medicine training is longer than one year, the average length of leave should not exceed 6 weeks per academic year. If leave exceeds these limits, as permitted or required by State or Federal regulations, the program director must have a plan approved by the ABNM to compensate for the lost educational time."


The ABNM has made the following modification to its leave policy to allow a one-time exemption for this year: "An additional 2 weeks of leave (10 working days) will be permitted in 2020 for all COVID-19 related reasons, including home quarantine."

The ABNM realizes that an additional 2 weeks of leave may be insufficient to cover absence due to serious illness, inability to return to work due to travel restrictions, institutional closures, or other reasons. If the amount of leave taken by a resident exceeds 8 weeks during the academic year, program directors will need have a plan approved by the ABNM to compensate for the lost educational time.

The ABNM will work with program directors to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on residents and training programs this year, and will re-evaluate the leave policy if the virus re-emerges next season.

Sincerely,

  
Jonathan E. McConathy, MD, PhD  
Chair

  
George M. Segall, MD  
Executive Director

JEM/GMS/mrf